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East Timor

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Asia-Australasia Dossier n° 31

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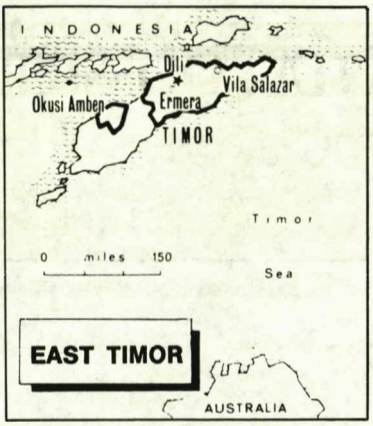


Area and population

Area in sq.km.: 14,925.
% cultivated agricultural land: 15.4.
Size of population in 1984: 755,000 (est.).
Average annual growth (1975-1980): 2.3%.
Population projection 2000: 1,145,000.
Death rate per 1,000: 21.
Birth rate per 1,000: 44.
% under 15 years: 41%.
Life expectancy: 42.5.

Economic and social indicators

Per capita income (US$): 714.
Hospital beds per 10,000 population: 20.
Doctors per 10,000 population: 0.3.
Adult literacy: 30%.
Phones per 10,000 population: 15.
Radios per 10,000 population: 60.

Religion

Buddhists: 0.9.
Chinese folk religionists: 0.4.
Muslims: 0.3.
Tribal religionists: 59.4.
Christians: 38.9.

Catholic statistics 1981

	1970	1975	1981
Baptized Catholics in ,000s	180	197	240
Catholics % of population	29.3	29.9	31.7
Parishes	3	3	21
Mission centres	80	84	145
with priests	15	16	—
without priests	65	68	145
Bishops	1	—	—
Priests	51	43	32
diocesan	43	31	21
religious	8	12	11
Priests per 10,000 Catholics	2.8	2.2	3.0
Priests per 10,000 inhabitants	0.8	0.7	1.3
Training centres for priesthood	2	2	—
Candidates for priesthood	20	11	17
Religious women	50	—	46
Religious brothers	10	—	7
Catechists	n.a.	n.a.	833

Sources: Far Eastern Economic Review, Yearbook (Hong Kong). Statistical Yearbook of the Catholic Church (Rome), World Christian Encyclopedia 1982 (Oxford). All data are estimates. Different sources give slightly different figures and percentages.

INTRODUCTION

"We felt stunned by this silence which seemed to allow us to die deserted." This cry of the religious of East Timor was the outcome of their reflection, presented at the Indonesian Major Religious Conference in 1981. They remarked that "they could not understand why the Indonesian and the universal Roman Church had not yet stated, openly and officially, their solidarity with the Church, the people and the religious of East Timor".

Since then much has changed. A long silence has been broken. The annexation of East Timor and the subsequent human rights' abuses have been exposed and openly condemned by Timorese Churchmen. National Catholic Bishops' Conferences (e.g. Indonesia, Portugal, the Netherlands and Japan) and Associations of Major Religious Superiors (e.g. Australia), in response, expressed their solidarity and concern for the Church and the people of East Timor. So on several occasions did Pope John Paul II.

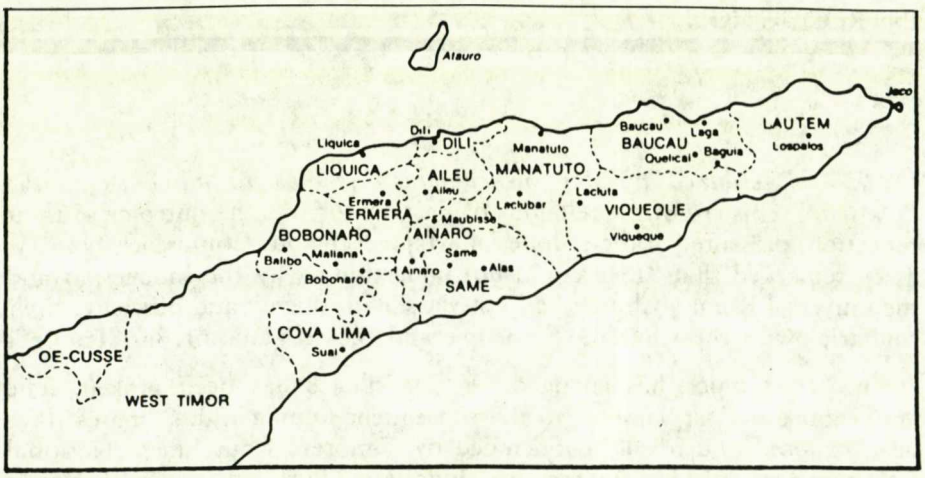
For several years now PMV's documentation and information service has been collecting data and articles concerning the situation in East Timor. But since it proved impossible to check these data in the field, the borders having been hermetically closed to outside observers, and because of the diversity of viewpoints, we always delayed publication of a dossier on East Timor.

When the Dutch Justice and Peace Commission (*Commissie Justitia et Pax Nederland*) published their dossier on East Timor in April 1984, after the draft text had been checked and rechecked by different independent resource persons, PMV requested permission to translate this dossier in a summarized form. Once again we checked the available documents.

This dossier, which is published about a year after the Dutch version went to the printer, was updated in the light of recent known developments.

We wish to thank the *Commissie Justitia et Pax Nederland* for their permission to use their work. Eventual misreadings or errors of fact, which may have occurred in the process of updating, remain our responsibility. The original Dutch version can be obtained from the Commissie Justitia et Pax Nederland, Statenlaan 35, 2582 GC 's-Gravenhage, The Netherlands.

Mil ROEKAERTS
PMV Asia Desk



CHRONOLOGY OF POLITICAL EVENTS

C. 1520	The Portuguese establish a settlement in East Timor.
1912	Uprising of Timorese against Portuguese control bloodily crushed.
1941-43	Australian troops with Timorese support fight the Japanese. 40 Australians and 40,000 Timorese die.
1949	Indonesia (including West Timor) wins independence from the Dutch.
April 1974	Military coup in Lisbon: Armed Forces' Movement overthrows fascist Caetano regime. Decolonization process commences. Establishment of political parties: ASDT (later FRETILIN, pro-independence after a short transition), UDT (pro-Portugal, advocates eventual transition to independence), APODETI (pro-integration with Indonesia). FRETILIN rapidly becomes the most popular and best organized of the three.
September 1974	Whitlam tells Suharto that an independent East Timor is unviable and a threat to regional security.
January 1975	UDT and FRETILIN form a pro-independence coalition. FRETILIN develops literacy, health and agricultural self-sufficiency programmes in the villages.
August 1975	UDT coup and civil war resulting in some 3,000 deaths, displacement of refugees to Australia and West Timor. FRETILIN victory.
28 November 1975	FRETILIN declares independence and proclaims the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

6 December 1975	Ford and Kissinger complete visit to Jakarta.
7 December 1975	Full-scale Indonesian invasion launched.
12 December 1975	UN General Assembly calls on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor. Australia supports the resolution. US abstains.
January 1976	UN Special Representative, Winspeare Guicciardi, is frustrated in his attempt to visit FRETILIN-controlled areas in East Timor.
April 1976	Australia presses for Red Cross (ICRC) to be readmitted to Timor.
May-July 1976	Indonesian-conducted process of integration of East Timor as 27th province of Indonesia is rejected by both Australia and US.
October 1976	Australian authorities seize Darwin radio link to avoid "embarrassing Indonesia".
19 November 1976	Reports mention that widespread fighting continues in East Timor, that FRETILIN controls 85 % of the territory, that 60,000 people have died.
January 1978	Australia extends de facto recognition to Indonesia's takeover of East Timor.
September 1978	Foreign ambassadors, shocked by visit to East Timor, call for urgent humanitarian aid.
3 December 1978	FRETILIN radio link with outside world ceases.
October 1979	ICRC says humanitarian situation in East Timor "as bad as Biafra". ICRC and CRS commence 6-month emergency programme.
June 1980	Uprising in Dili coinciding with FRETILIN attacks.
July-September 1981	Massive Indonesian offensive using 30,000 civilians as a "fence of legs" to drive guerillas from the mountains. Many Timorese die but few members of FRETILIN captured.
November 1981	Australian Senate votes to conduct inquiry into conditions in East Timor.
January 1982	Apostolic Administrator da Costa Lopes predicts possible famine.
November 1982-January 1983	Counter-offensive by restructured FRETILIN.
March 1983	Cease-fire negotiated; photographs, tape recording and captured documents smuggled to Portugal. General Benny Murdani becomes new chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces.
June 1983	Mgr. da Costa Lopes removed by Vatican under Indonesian pressure. Mgr. Belo succeeds as Apostolic Administrator.
August 1983	New military offensive launched against FRETILIN.

AN ACT OF GENOCIDE

THE HISTORY OF A COLONY

Colonial period

It was around 1520 that the Portuguese first arrived in Timor. By 1566, some Dominican missionaries had taken up permanent residence in the area. Soon thereafter the Portuguese were expelled from Java, Celebes and the Molucca Islands by the Dutch, whereupon they retreated to the Lesser Sunda Islands, Flores, Solor and Timor. In 1651 the Dutch conquered the Kupang stronghold on West Timor and later occupied the whole of the western part of the island, but it was not until 1859 that Portugal officially acknowledged Dutch sovereignty over Flores, Solor and West Timor. When Indonesia became independent in 1949 it took over West Timor from the Dutch, and thereafter, on several occasions, the Indonesian government declared that it laid no claims to East Timor. The Indonesian representative at the 15th Plenary Session of the UN explicitly stated that, with the exception of New Guinea, Indonesia had no claims to territories in the Indonesian archipelago — e.g. on Borneo or Timor — that had never been part of the Dutch East Indies.[1]

Until the end of the 19th century Portugal exercised no real sovereignty over East Timor and it was not until 1910 that the first Portuguese Republic succeeded in pacifying the whole of East Timor. Later on, Salazar used East Timor as a place of exile for political opponents. In 1951, following Japanese occupation during the Second World War, East Timor became one of the Portuguese overseas territories. All East Timorese were granted Portuguese citizenship and in 1972 the "overseas territory" became an "autonomous region of the Portuguese Republic". Although this arrangement might seem to indicate some measure of liberalization, the actual situation did not change a great deal: there was no freedom of expression, no political life and almost no development. The 1960s saw the emergence of an educated elite with national aspirations, often the product of the Catholic schools and, in particular, of the Dili seminary. Nevertheless, it was not until the Portuguese revolution of 1974 that indigenous political forces were able to develop freely.[2]

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[1] Statement of Dr. Subandrio, quoted in: *Oost Timor Tribunaal, Verslag van het Oost Timor Tribunaal in Lissabon (Juni 1981)*, Komitee Indonesia, Amsterdam, 1981.
[2] CIIR, "East Timor", *Comment* (London), 1982, p. 3.

The struggle for independence: April 1974-December 1975

The Portuguese revolution of April 1974, which put an end to the dictatorial regime of Marcello Caetano was, in part, fuelled by disgruntled army officers discontented by the fact that Portugal had tried, by all possible means, to hang on to its colonies. Military expenses per inhabitant to this end were higher than those of the USA during the Vietnam War. One of the main policies of the new rulers, therefore, was to divest themselves of this liability as quickly as possible, but in an orderly fashion. Portuguese representatives were sent to Dili in May 1974 and the new governor arrived in November 1974.

In the meantime three political groups, all established in May 1974, had come to the fore. The UDT (Timorese Democratic Union) which consisted mainly of government officials, was an "establishment" party and favoured federation with Portugal. The ASDT (Social Democratic Association of East Timor) took a more radical, nationalist position. Its manifesto called for the rejection of colonialism and racial discrimination and demanded the right to independence, immediate participation in local government and a campaign against corruption. By September 1974, the ASDT changed its name to FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor). FRETILIN represents a coming-together of two tendencies: on the one hand, progressive Christian influences and, on the other hand, Marxist influences inspired by the revolutionary nationalism of Amilcar Cabral, founder of the State of Guinea Bissau which became independent in 1974. The change in the party's name indicates a broadening of political scope to attract the greatest possible number of those in favour of national independence. In spite of all Indonesia's statements, FRETILIN was never a Communist party. The third political party, the APODETI (Democratic People's Association of Timor), by far the smallest of the three, was in favour of union with Indonesia.

The Portuguese governor tried to establish a government council in which the three parties approved by Portugal (UDT, FRETILIN, APODETI) were to participate. The APODETI refused to cooperate because it wanted negotiations with Indonesia alone. FRETILIN and the UDT, the latter having meanwhile accepted the possibility of an independent state, formed a coalition. In May 1975, the Portuguese governor proposed a programme of decolonization to the three parties. The APODETI at first refused to take part in the negotiations, while in the meantime the coalition between FRETILIN and the UDT disintegrated. The UDT stepped up its contacts with the Indonesian authorities and in July 1975 one of its leaders went as far as to state in Jakarta that his party would agree to union with Indonesia if the people would so wish. When the discussions on the proposals for decolonization were reopened in Macao in June 1975, FRETILIN in its turn refused to participate because in its view independence was not an issue for discussion. Nevertheless, in July 1975 the

governor enacted a law dealing with the formation of a government, an elected parliament and, in principle, transfer of sovereignty before October 1978.

On the international level, too, there were complications over East Timor. In September 1974, G. Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia, met President Suharto of Indonesia and after this meeting a spokesman for Whitlam stated that "an independent East Timor would not be a viable state and would constitute a possible threat to the region".[3] Along the same lines Adam Malik, the then Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared in December 1974 that only two options were open to East Timor: union with Indonesia or the continuation of the Portuguese presence.

In August 1975, having been told by Indonesian intelligence chiefs that Indonesia would intervene if FRETILIN gained power, the UDT leaders attempted a coup in a bid to force FRETILIN to expel its small but vocal left wing. They seized key installations in Dili and Bacau and issued an ultimatum to the Portuguese authorities demanding immediate independence and the imprisonment of certain FRETILIN leaders. The Portuguese provincial government rejected the ultimatum but, having only 100 troops of its own, chose not to intervene. Its efforts to prevent violence failed, and fighting broke out in Dili and the central mountain districts. Timorese soldiers of the Portuguese army left their barracks and joined one of the two sides (UDT, FRETILIN). The majority of these soldiers joined FRETILIN and this became the deciding factor in the civil war that had erupted in the meantime. On 24 September, the civil war ended with a FRETILIN victory: FRETILIN controlled the whole of East Timor except for the Oecussi-Ambeno salient and the island of Atauro on which the governor took refuge. The civil war claimed 2,000 to 3,000 victims.[4]

FRETILIN immediately began a programme of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Political reforms were introduced at village level, agrarian cooperatives were established, mass literacy campaigns and a programme of land reform was started. Through these reforms FRETILIN proved its administrative abilities. In the meantime the Portuguese government entered into negotiations with the governments of Australia and Indonesia on the establishment of an international army. The Foreign Minister of Portugal met his Indonesian counterpart in Rome in November 1975. Their common statement recognized that "the responsibility for the decolonization of Portuguese Timor lies with Portugal which, as the legal authority in that region, commits itself to do the utmost to bring about decolonization through the people of Portuguese Timor".[5] In the meantime the leaders

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[3] Kohen, A., and Taylor, J., "An Act of Genocide: Indonesia's Invasion of East Timor", *Tapol* (London), 1979, p. 18.

[4] CIIR, o.c., p. 4.

[5] Dianoux, H.J., "Le Timor Oriental, Une tragédie passée sous silence", *Etudes* (Paris), June 1981, p. 733.

of the UDT and of the APODETI had fled to West Timor. From 14 September on, FRETILIN came under attack from West Timor, action which, according to Indonesian sources, was instigated by refugees from Timor with the help of Indonesian volunteers. Others, however, stated that these actions were the work of Indonesian forces.[6] Against the background of the threat of invasion FRETILIN unilaterally proclaimed independence on 28 November 1975. Francisco Xavier do Amaral was appointed President of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. One of the first things the new republic required was international recognition, including the hope, at a later stage, of being able to appeal for help to the countries that had recognized the republic. The leaders of the UDT and of the APODETI, who had taken refuge in West Timor, in turn declared that East Timor had united with Indonesia. Portugal acknowledged neither the Democratic Republic of East Timor nor the union with Indonesia.

THE FOREIGN LINK

Portugal and East Timor

Both Indonesia and FRETILIN supporters blamed Portugal for a lack of interest in East Timor. A. Kohen and J. Taylor stated that since the coup in Lisbon, the Portuguese government had portrayed its stand on East Timor as a principled one: an attempt to supervise orderly decolonization under extremely adverse conditions. The government's diplomatic actions, they remarked, appeared superficially to substantiate this position. By early 1975, however, the Portuguese government's concern to bring about acceptable political independence was increasingly tempered by its desire to rid itself of its colonial burden as quickly as possible. This explains why the Portuguese government failed to respond to FRETILIN entreaties to return to Dili after the UDT had been defeated in September, in order to resume the decolonization process. Although Portugal made some half-hearted attempts to arrange meetings with the three Timorese parties in September and November, it did nothing to encourage these talks, and appeared, rather, to be waiting for an outcome it had already tacitly accepted.[7]

A report on East Timor by the Indonesian Council of Churches also criticized Portugal because, in a period of increasing decolonization in Asia, it held fast to the idea that East Timor would always remain part of the Portuguese "imperium". The result of this obsolete position was that when the revolution in Portugal on 25 April 1974 heralded the prospect of

[6] *Ibid*, p. 733.
[7] Kohen, A., o.c., pp. 108-109.

decolonization, East Timor was caught unprepared. The report stated that "the Portuguese governor and his full staff left Dili for the island of Atauro on 17 August 1975 thus de facto renouncing Portuguese responsibility. When the governor left the island of Atauro, Portugal de facto abdicated every historical and moral right it had to speak as the sovereign authority of East Timor."[8]

Indonesia and East Timor

Against this background, the report attempted to show that Indonesia, more or less unintentionally, found itself confronted with the problem of East Timor. "Because of the possibility of a long civil war between FRETILIN and the UDT which might cause widespread suffering and terror, and also because of the possibility that foreign powers might intervene at the request of the so-called Democratic Republic of East Timor, Indonesia had to choose between two alternatives: to remain passive or to intervene in order to speed up the process of self-determination. On 7 December 1975 Indonesia opted for intervention. After this decision attempts were made under a provisional government to implement, as far as possible in the given circumstances, the people of East Timor's right to self-determination. In the meantime the United Nations took a series of decisions concerning the region."[9]

Apart from this argument, which Indonesia emphasized strongly, fear of a revival of separatism also played a role in the Indonesian attitude towards East Timor. The Indonesian government apparently feared that the proximity of an independent, politically left-wing state would undermine its authority in other Indonesian territories such as Aceh and Irian Jaya, where dissident movements already existed. Fear of Communism played an equally important role. This fear dates back to the political developments in Indonesia since 1965 when Suharto, after the Communist-inspired military coup, followed a decidedly anti-Communist policy. Consequently Indonesia was concerned about the political stance which the government of East Timor would take. While FRETILIN was not Communist, there was a risk that the so-called Republic might in effect become another Cuba, with the Republic's rulers turning to the Eastern European bloc or to China for financial assistance. East Timor was one of the world's poorest nations and there is a limit to what any people can achieve on its own. East Timor might have turned to the West for help, but this was unlikely to have achieved much since the West also had an interest in maintaining a strong and stable Indonesia. A flourishing East Timor would have undermined

[8] DGI, "Oost-Timor: een rapport van de kerken van Indonesie", *Informatiedienst NMR* ('s Hertogenbosch), 12 November 1982, pp. 9-10.
[9] *Ibid*, pp. 10-11.

that goal. The only alternative would have been the Communist nations.[10]

Finally, closely linked to this but pointing more directly to the overall situation in South-East Asia, is the argument put to the UN General Assembly by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. "I believe that, beyond the efforts of the Indonesian Government to justify its invasion of East Timor to restore peace and order, the truth is that Indonesia has become some kind of policeman in South-East Asia. With the extraordinary victories of the heroic peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the balance of power in that region has been radically changed and Indonesia has perforce become the stronghold of imperialism, which has now changed its conventional policy of direct intervention and adopted the strategy of war by proxy. East Timor is situated in a strategic area vital to the imperialist economic and nuclear strategy in the region."[11]

AN ACT OF GENOCIDE

Invasion and occupation: December 1975-September 1977

On 7 December 1975 Indonesian troops invaded East Timor. FRETILIN opposed the invasion without any foreign help, using the weapons left by the Portuguese army, but massive military action pushed FRETILIN back into the mountainous interior. On 29 December the government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor fled from Aileu and took up residence in Ainaro. By 13 December the enclave of Oecussi-Ambeno had been completely occupied and the island of Atauro fell into Indonesian hands on 29 December. The invasion was marked by a great deal of cruelty. The former Australian ambassador to East Timor, J. Dunn, reported the following story which he recorded during a visit to a refugee camp: "At 2.00 p.m. on 7 December 1975, 59 men, both Chinese and Timorese, were brought into the wharf. These men were shot one by one... with the crowd, which amounted to some 500, being ordered to count. The victims were ordered to stand on the edge of the pier facing the sea, so that when they were shot their bodies fell into the water. Indonesian soldiers stood by and fired at the bodies in the water in the event that there was any further sign of life. Many of the men, and the women, had pleaded with the Indonesians, some of them on their knees, but none of the group was

[10] Suter, K., "West Irian, East Timor and Indonesia", *Minority Rights Group* (London), September 1979, p. 21.
[11] *Ibid*, p. 21.

spared."[12] Reports of mass executions, rape and plunder were confirmed from various sides.[13]

Portugal broke off diplomatic relations with Indonesia, condemned the Indonesian invasion and appealed to the UN Security Council. After a full debate on 11 December 1975, the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, since reaffirmed annually, which recognized "the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination, freedom and independence". The resolution deplored Indonesia's military intervention and called on Indonesia to "withdraw without delay its forces from the territory". The resolution was adopted by 72 votes to 10, with 43 countries abstaining. The Security Council unanimously adopted a similar resolution on 22 December (nr 384) urging Indonesia to withdraw its forces and requesting the UN Secretary-General to send a special representative to East Timor. Indonesia ignored the request, claiming that the fighting was carried out by "volunteers", not Indonesian regular forces.[14]

The special UN representative, Guicciardi, visited Dili in January 1976 and met some members of the "provisional government". According to them it was impossible for Guicciardi to visit the regions under FRETILIN control for "technical and security reasons". UN Secretary-General Waldheim reported on this visit to the Security Council in April 1976. After studying this report the Security Council adopted a similar resolution (nr 398) with 12 votes in favour and 2 abstentions. Indonesia, however, persisted in its attitude. On 31 May the "provisional government" installed by Indonesia on East Timor approved a petition addressed to the Indonesian Republic requesting union with Indonesia. On 17 July the Indonesian parliament passed a law which incorporated East Timor into the Indonesian Republic as its 27th province. As far as Indonesia was concerned, the question of self-determination for the people of East Timor was no longer relevant. Henceforth East Timor was part of Indonesia and all problems related to self-determination were considered to be internal matters. Since the presentation of this petition did not, however, conform to the UN norms on self-determination, the UN never accepted this Indonesian claim.

Estimates of the number of victims of the invasion vary from 50,000 to 70,000 or about 7% of the total population.[15] In March 1977, the former Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Malik, admitted that 50,000 and perhaps as many as 80,000 East Timorese had died, but he

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[12] Dunn, J., *The East Timor Situation: Reports on talks with Timorese Refugees in Portugal*, Canberra, 11 February 1977, mimeo, p. 8.

[13] Savat, K., "Oost Timor, Een stille tragedie", *Kerk en leven* (Antwerp), 21 October 1982, p. 19 — CIIR, o.c., p.5 — Dianoux, o.c., p.736 — Intervention of Pax Christi International at the 39 UN session, Commission on Human Rights, PXI-DH-62, 7 February 1983, p. 1 — Amnesty International reports and press releases.

[14] Dianoux, H.J., o.c., p. 733.

[15] Quoted in Retboll, T., ed, *East Timor, Indonesia and the Western Democracies*, IWGIA Document (Copenhagen), 40, 1980, p. 71.

added: "What is this compared to the 600,000 people who want union with Indonesia".[16]

International Reactions

Initially, events in Timor attracted little interest abroad, but the Indonesian invasion gave rise to widespread international concern. The Indonesian government, however, went ahead, in the knowledge that the United States and Australia would not take any action against them.

The United States

The attitude of the US government towards East Timor was of major importance for Indonesia. This government had provided military as well as diplomatic support for Indonesia's East Timor policy. During the invasion it became clear that the weapons produced in Indonesia were of a very poor quality and for this reason US arms supplies to Indonesia were extremely important. Government officials have admitted that the invasion was carried out using roughly 90 % US equipment and that the operation could not have been conducted without American weapons.[17]

An American spokesman declared before the House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations that Indonesia had become increasingly concerned by the potential for instability in its eastern region and by FRETILIN's ideological orientation, due to the fact that Portugal was unable to control the situation because of the civil war between FRETILIN and UDT, and against the background of the fall of Saigon and Phnom Penh earlier in the same year.[18] The American government in no way questioned the Indonesian invasion. According to State Department legal advisor Aldrich, this did not represent a legal judgement or endorsement of what took place. "It was, simply, the judgement of those responsible for our policy in the area that the integration was an accomplished fact, that the realities of the situation would not be changed by our opposition to what had occurred, and that such a policy would not serve our best interest in the light of the importance of our relations with Indonesia."[19] In the UN Security Council, the US voted in favour of resolution nr 384 in 1975, but abstained in 1976. In the UN General Assembly, the US has always voted against resolutions on East Timor, at least after "formal integration".

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[16] Quoted in Savat, K., o.c. .

[17] la Roque, Admiral G.R., *Additional Statement for the Record*. Hearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, 10 June 1980, p. 14.

[18] Holbrooke, R., *Statement before the House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations*, Committee on Appropriations, 10 June 1980, p. 4.

[19] Statement of State Department Legal Advisor Georg Aldrich, quoted in Suter, K., o.c., p. 23.

Australia

In Australia, there was widespread opposition to the Indonesian invasion. Successive governments, however, apart from some symbolic gestures meant to allay public opinion, considered the problem of East Timor as secondary to their overall South-East Asia policy which, since the end of the 1960s, aimed at more intensive relations with the majority of South-East Asian countries.

Prime Minister Whitlam (Labor Party) declared on 24 September 1974, during a state visit to Indonesia, that an independent Timor would be "an unviable state and a potential threat to the area". The Liberal-National Party coalition, which came to power after the dismissal of the Labor Party in a constitutional crisis in 1975, recognized East Timor de facto as part of Indonesia in 1978. It was only to please the Australian people that the Australian government voted in favour of the United Nations resolution (December 1975) which recognized the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination, freedom and independence. At the same time, however, they abstained with regard to the paragraph which deplored Indonesia's military intervention. A perceptible change occurred from 1976 onwards. Radio transmitters, operating from Australia, which were in contact with East Timor were confiscated. The Guicciardi UN mission met with little cooperation on the part of the Australian government. Until June 1984, FRETILIN leaders were refused an Australian visa. Australia abstained from voting in the United Nations until 1978 when it started voting against the UN resolutions on East Timor. In early 1979, Australia opened negotiations with Indonesia over the issue of the Straits between Timor and Australia, thus admitting de facto its recognition of East Timor as part of Indonesian territory.[20]

The re-election of a Labor Government in March 1983 brought little change. Prime Minister Hawke backed away from his party policy, which demanded "de-recognition" of the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia, when he told Indonesia's Suharto that it was regrettable that the Timorese had not been given self-determination, adding: "That was in the past... we must now look to the future. That's what the interests of Australia and Indonesia require. This is a country of 150 million people and there is no country so important to us... strategically, economically and in other ways. It would be grossly irresponsible for my government not to address itself constructively to those questions."[21] Efforts of the centre-left wing during the party's National Conference in July 1984, to push through a resolution effectively demanding that the Labor government reverse the decision of the previous Liberal government recognizing East

[20] Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, *The Human Rights and Conditions of the People of East Timor*, September 1983, p. 75

[21] Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER, Hongkong), *Asia 1984 Yearbook*, p. 123

Timor as part of Indonesia and demanding that the government press for an internationally acceptable act of self-determination to enable the East Timorese to choose their own future, including independence if they wanted it, failed.[22]

The struggle for the interior: September 1977-September 1979

Although Indonesia formally proclaimed the incorporation of East Timor as its 27th province in July 1976, the military struggle went on. Indonesia occupied the main cities and the northern coast but FRETILIN controlled the mountainous interior. The Indonesian army, unable to penetrate into the interior, adopted a strategy of bombing the area both from the sea and from the air. This was possible thanks primarily to US weapons supplies. From September 1976 onwards, OV-10 Bronco planes, designed for anti-guerilla warfare, were used.

Reports mention that hundreds of villages have been wiped off the face of the earth, that many names on the map of East Timor no longer exist.[23] In a letter smuggled to Portugal some religious wrote: "Since September the war has intensified. The planes do not rest. Everyday hundreds of people die. The bodies are left for the vultures... Villages are completely destroyed. The war started its third year and nobody knows how long it will last." According to a Portuguese priest, Father Leonete de Rego, who, after living for three years with the FRETILIN guerrillas in the mountains, surrendered to the Indonesian authorities in 1979, food had been scarce since late 1977.[24] The Indonesian "search and destroy" strategy forced the population to flee from place to place without being able to cultivate the land. It is alleged that napalm was used.

At the end of 1979, on the orders of the Indonesian army, some 300,000 people were moved from their original scattered villages to "resettlement sites". Life in these camps was not easy. The camps were overcrowded, there was lack of accommodation, there was not enough work and the people were forced to render unpaid service, including obligatory night-watch duty, to the army. According to Brigadier General Saronto of the Indonesian Red Cross, the people were brought to these "resettlement sites" for purely socio-economic reasons. In the first place, the traditional "slash and burn" method of agriculture was claimed to be ecologically and economically very unprofitable. Centralized regrouping of the population was supposed to encourage agrarian and economic development. Secondly,

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[22] FEER, 26 July 1984, p. 34.
[23] ACFOA, *Aid and East Timor*, Camberra, July 1979, p. 5.
[24] Justitia et Pax Nederland, *Brief uit Oost Timor*, dd. November 1977, p. 1.

this regrouping would put an end to the Portuguese model of domination based on the principle of divide and rule and thus lessen conflicts between tribes. Evidence points to the fact, however, that the camps were established primarily for military reasons.[25] Through regrouping the Indonesian army could control the people and keep them separated from the FRETILIN. As only the land in the immediate neighbourhood of the camps could be cultivated, due to an increasing stream of refugees, the already precarious food situation was worsened by this resettlement policy. The situation in East Timor, described by David Jenkis of *The Far Eastern Economic Review* as "a state of collective trauma", was aggravated by the lack of an adequate network for the distribution of aid, lack of means of transport and poor infrastructure. Moreover, corruption was rampant. According to the Australian Council of Overseas Aid, in February 1979 an average of 150 people a day came to the poorly-stocked Government Health Centre in Maubisse while, at the same time, there were medicines for sale in the Chinese shops at prices the people could not afford to pay.[26] Acceptance of Indonesian aid was, moreover, often considered an act of collaboration with the occupying forces.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AID

Amnesty and Human Rights

In August 1977, President Suharto offered an amnesty to all FRETILIN fighters surrendering to the Indonesian forces, an offer which was repeated on 31 December 1977. From mid-1978 onwards, quite a number of FRETILIN fighters responded to this appeal as hunger drove them out of the mountains. The promises, however, were not kept. Between the end of 1978 and September 1979 several hundred Timorese were executed, some of them immediately upon surrender, some later on. And it was not only former FRETILIN fighters but also civilians suspected of pro-FRETILIN sympathies who met this fate.[27] According to Amnesty International such summary executions, most of which took place before October 1979, were resumed after the International Red Cross left East Timor in April 1981.[28]

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[25] Intervention of Pax Christi, o.c., p. 2 — Senate Standing Committee, o.c., p. 78.
[26] ACFOA, o.c., p. 14.
[27] Amnesty International (AI), *Statement of Amnesty International's Concerns in East Timor*, London, August 1983, ASA 21/09/83.
[28] AI, Press release, 4 June 1982, p. 4.

International aid

Following the civil war between UDT and FRETILIN, the International Red Cross (ICRC) had access to East Timor from September till early December 1975. After the ICRC was forced to leave on 3 December and up to October 1979, only the Indonesian Red Cross was allowed to provide aid in East Timor. It was not, however, until a year after the effects of the Indonesian bombings and resettlement policy became known abroad, and following a guided visit of foreign journalists and diplomats in October 1978, that aid began. It was estimated that 200,000 Timorese (30 % of the population) suffered from acute undernourishment, and that 60,000 of them were in urgent need of medical treatment.[29] In 1979, spokesmen for the ICRC described the situation as being "as bad as Biafra and potentially as serious as Kampuchea". According to Anderson, in a report to the Subcommittee on International Organizations and the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House of Representatives, the delay in starting a large-scale international aid campaign was due to the lack of international pressure on Indonesia. He stated that the American ambassador "deliberately refrained, even within the walls of the State Department, from proposing humanitarian aid to East Timor until the generals in Jakarta gave him the green light".[30]

The international aid campaigns of the ICRC and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which reached some 300,000 Timorese and came to an end in April 1981, came in for criticism. CRS in particular was criticized because this Catholic aid agency failed to consult with possible counterparts such as the Church in East Timor or its ecclesiastical aid organizations. On the contrary, the CRS programme, was set up in consultation with the Indonesian authorities and the army and distribution was carried out by the Indonesian authorities under CRS supervision. For the people of East Timor it became difficult psychologically to accept this aid because CRS was considered part of the military system at the service of the occupying forces. CRS aid was, moreover, directed primarily towards the resettlement sites where land could still be cultivated and thus it favoured dependence on food aid from abroad.

The death toll

It is difficult to estimate the number of victims of the famine, but there are fairly accurate estimates of the total death toll, including the victims

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[29] FEER, 16 November 1979, pp. 24-25.

[30] Anderson, B.O., *Prepared Testimony on Human Rights in Indonesia and East Timor*, Subcommittee on International Organizations and the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, 6 February 1980, p. 21.

of the civil war of August 1975 and the subsequent Indonesian invasion. According to the last Portuguese census in 1970, the population of East Timor stood at 610,541. With a yearly population increase of 2 % the total population would have been 670,000 by December 1975. The Church in Indonesia mentions a population of 688,771 in 1974. A conservative estimate would therefore be 650,000 at least. According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, the population in 1980 was only 552,945: this would mean that after five years of Indonesian occupation 15 % of the population had died. Some estimates give an even higher figure. James Dunn, Chairman of the Australian Human Rights Council and former Australian consul in Dili, claimed in late 1979 that an Indonesian army survey had established that only 330,000 people remained in East Timor. He concluded that the territory's population had been halved since 1974.[31] Pax Christi International, in its intervention at the 39th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, spoke of 250,000 victims.

INDONESIAN OFFENSIVES

Operation Security: April 1981-end of 1982

The resistance in East Timor, particularly in the eastern districts, had not been broken by the 1977 and 1978 bombings and the 1979 famine. Although the fighting died down somewhat, Dili again came under attack on 10 June 1980. In March 1981, there were large-scale military exercises in East Timor in preparation for *Operasi Keamanan* (Operation Security) planned for April.

Almost all men between 15 and 50 years of age were forced to help the army. Soldiers und people formed a continuous front to comb the countryside. Resistance fighters faced with a wall of legs (*pager betis*) were confronted with the dilemma either of firing at their countrymen or surrendering. According to witnesses from East Timor, most FRETILIN fighters chose the latter course. The leaders of FRETILIN had attempted to send messages asking the people to separate themselves from the Indonesians, but this was not possible because if they had attempted to do so, they would have been killed by the army as they had no weapons to defend themselves. Many of the FRETILIN fighters, therefore, decided to lay down their own lives. They preferred death in order to save their people on these forced patrols.[32]

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[31] Quoted in FEER, 6 February 1981, p. 16.
[32] ACFOA, *Dossier on East Timor*, Canberra, March 1982, p. 9-6.

This military action, too, was accompanied by violations of human rights. According to Amnesty International, Indonesian troops in 1981 massacred a group of about 300 Timorese who had been forced to flee because of *Operasi Keamanan*. The refugees, including women and children, had sought shelter in a sanctuary, the Rock of St. Anthony at Lacluta.[33] During the same operation some 3,200 Timorese were exiled to the island of Atauro. According to the Indonesian authorities these people, again including women and children, were temporarily moved for security reasons.[34] The Australian parliamentary delegation which visited East Timor in the summer of 1983 referred to "detainees or temporarily displaced persons".[35] Amnesty International, however, mentions "Atauro and other places of detention".[36]

Pacification efforts: October 1982-August 1983

After *Operasi Keamanan*, UNICEF, in cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross, started new aid programmes. CRS too restarted its activities, mainly in the form of large-scale agricultural projects. The Apostolic Administrator made a request to the Nuncio in Jakarta that CRS work in close contact with the local and diocesan Church and that these programmes should not be subjected to the military authorities.[37] The ICRC decided once more to suspend its activities in July 1983 because it was unable to apply usual ICRC criteria. Specifically, ICRC delegates could not obtain permission to visit any prisons or to assess requirements for humanitarian aid on mainland Timor.[38] According to reports of the Australian Senate Commission after a parliamentary delegation had visited East Timor, the Indonesian government had also tried to improve the situation of the East Timorese by developing the region as quickly as possible. During the period, the per capita budget for East Timor was much higher than it was for the other provinces.[39]

In the same period there were also a number of improvements in the military field. By the end of June 1983, FRETILIN representatives in Lisbon announced that in March Indonesian forces had taken initiatives towards an armistice. According to FRETILIN, discussions were held between the FRETILIN Commander Gusmao and Carrascalao, the Governor of East Timor (21 March). These discussions were followed by a meeting on 23 March between Gusmao and Colonel Purwanto, a supporter of the "hearts

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[33] AI, Press Release, 4 June 1982, p. 4.
[34] Quoted in ACFOA (82), o.c., p. 25-4.
[35] *Official Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Indonesia*, July-August 1983, p. 177.
[36] AI, Statement, o.c., p. 8.
[37] *National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City), 9 March 1984, p. 7.
[38] ACFOA, *East Timor Report* (Canberra), November 1983, p. 2.
[39] Official Report, o.c., p. 65 — Senate Standing Committee, o.c., p. 41.

and minds campaign", a psychological strategy aimed at convincing FRETILIN fighters to return to the folds of society.[40] As a condition for armistice, FRETILIN asked that Indonesia inform the United Nations and Portugal about the negotiations. When, three months later, this had not yet been done, FRETILIN held a press conference in Lisbon to publicize these negotiations. On 29 June 1983, the Indonesian Foreign Minister retaliated by stating that the reports of FRETILIN were incorrect: there were no negotiations with FRETILIN and no ceasefire.[41] FRETILIN responded by publishing photographs showing the FRETILIN commander and Colonel Purwanto sitting at a table covered by the FRETILIN flag.

On torture, and how to keep it secret

In sharp contrast to these pacification efforts are the instructions laid down in an Indonesian army manual, captured by FRETILIN in late 1982 and authenticated by Amnesty International, which permitted Indonesian troops operating in East Timor to use torture. The manual, which is divided in eight sections, seven of which are marked "secret", includes a chapter on interrogation procedures (PROTA/01-B/VH/1982). It tells soldiers not to photograph prisoners being stripped naked and tortured by electric shocks and not to allow local witnesses in order "to avoid arousing the antipathy of the people". It is better to produce attractive photographs, the manual suggests, to undermine the morale and fighting spirit of the FRETILIN and to draw the Church into supporting operations to restore security.[42]

Operation Reunion: August-December 1983

Jakarta's new offensive against FRETILIN, *Operasi Persatuan*, was launched after the visit to East Timor in July 1983 of the hawkish new chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General Benny Murdani and four top-level defence department officers. Murdani, known to be a hardliner, favoured military force and abandoned the "hearts and minds" policy proposed earlier by Colonel Purwanto. He informed the Jakarta press that if FRETILIN did not surrender he would "hit them without mercy using all Indonesia's arsenal". A military build-up began immediately. The number of military personnel increased to 10,000, over half of whom were engaged in the offensive directed at FRETILIN strongholds and the capture or killing of the FRETILIN leader, José Gusmao. Additional helicopters,

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[40] Official Report, o.c., pp.187-190.
[41] *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, XXIX, July 1983, p. 32258.
[42] *ICMS Asia Newsletter* (Hong-Kong), February 1984, p. 15.

AMX tanks, A4 ground attack Skyhawks and OV-10 counter-insurgency Broncos were moved in.[43]

A few months later, during a visit to East Timor (Christmas period 1983), General Murdani warned "those who are deluded enough to believe that they can set up a state outside the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia" that their efforts were "doomed to failure because the Armed Forces will never stop performing the duty with which they have been entrusted". But his appeal to "everyone in the hills, the forests, the caves and the towns to halt their efforts and surrender to the authorities" was a clear sign that the offensive had failed.[44] This has since been confirmed by the Apostolic Administrator, Mgr. Belo, who, in a letter dated 18 February 1984 and smuggled out of the country to his exiled predecessor, Mgr. da Costa Lopes, wrote that the Indonesian military "thought to finish off things by the end of December, but now we are already in February and the end of the military operation cannot be seen. In the eastern region of Lospalos alone, 10 battalions are currently fighting". It is amazing, Mgr. Belo added, "that with so many battalions, helicopters, tanks and aircraft in the country, they still need to enlist local militia".[45]

The continuing war

The military build-up in East Timor and General Benny Murdani's public warning in August 1983 that Indonesia would launch an all-out offensive against FRETILIN unless they surrendered, is hardly consistent with Indonesia's claims that FRETILIN is a spent force.

Jakarta claims FRETILIN numbers have been reduced to about 100 poorly armed guerrillas, while FRETILIN, for its part, claims to have around 6,800 fighters operating in the centre and southern border zones, apart from their stronghold area in the eastern Lospalos zone. In April 1983 well-placed local Church sources claimed that FRETILIN was organized in ten units, each comprising 120 guerrillas: four of these units are equipped with modern weaponry acquired through Indonesian channels.[46] This estimate, which appears to be the most accurate, excludes supporters and relatives. Any estimate of FRETILIN strength and durability, moreover, must take into account the extensive clandestine network established by FRETILIN in Indonesian-controlled centres since 1978. The existence of this network is confirmed in detail in the pages of an Indonesian army manual captured by FRETILIN late in 1982 and authenticated by Amnesty

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[43] ACFOA, *East Timor Report*, o.c., p. 2.
[44] APHD, "East Timor and Self-determination", *Newsletter* (Sydney), July-August 1983, p. 2.
[45] *The Tablet* (London), 12 May 1984, p. 447.
[46] ACFOA, *East Timor Report*, o.c., p.2 — APHD, o.c., p. 2.

International. The manual provides some credibility for FRETILIN claims that "FRETILIN is the people and the people are FRETILIN".[47]

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC ACTIONS

After the UN Security Council had adopted resolutions on East Timor in December 1975 and April 1976, and after the General Assembly, in a resolution passed in November 1975, had urged the withdrawal of Indonesian troops from East Timor, these resolutions were taken up annually in the General Assembly till 1983. Each year Indonesia ignored the resolutions.

Indonesia's representative to the United Nations consistently told the UN General Assembly that Jakarta totally and categorically rejects the resolution which it considers to be "unwarranted inference" in Indonesia's internal affairs. Integration, according to Indonesia, is unquestionable and irreversible.

Resolutions on East Timor in the UN General Assembly

Year	Resolution	In favour	Against	Abstention
1975	3485 (XXX)	72	10	43
1976	31/53	68	20	49
1977	32/34	67	26	47
1978	33/39	59	31	44
1979	34/40	62	31	45
1980	35/27	58	35	46
1981	36/50	54	42	46
1982	37/30	50	46	50

Source: ***Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, The Human Rights and Conditions of the People of East Timor, p. 68.***

This table shows that the number of votes in favour decreases every year. The content of these resolutions has also switched from unequivocal condemnation of Indonesian military intervention to greater attention to the humanitarian needs of East Timor. All these resolutions, however, mention the right of self-determination of the people of East Timor and consider Portugal as having administrative power. Indonesia hopes, on the other hand, at some time in the future to obtain a favourable decision, thus finally eliminating the problem of East Timor from the agenda once and for all.

[47] TAPOL *Bulletin* (London), September 1983, p. 6.

The General Committee of the UN General Assembly decided on 21 September 1983 to defer debate on East Timor until its 39th session in 1984. The postponement, proposed by Norway's Ambassador Vraalsen, was adopted by the Committee without debate and ratified by the full Assembly on 23 September. The move followed an announcement by the Secretary-General on 19 August, that he would not report on East Timor this year because of "recent developments". Whether the term "recent developments" was a reference to the talks between FRETILIN and Indonesia in East Timor, to Jakarta's August offensive, or to behind-the-scenes diplomatic activities at the UN, is not clear. It is likely, however, that the deferral was, at least in part, motivated by the Secretary-General's desire to defuse the issue and promote a climate in which negotiations between Portugal and Indonesia could proceed. Instead of reactivating the issue, the UN took another step towards freezing General Assembly actions when the Decolonization Committee, during the September 1984 session, shelved its discussion of the East Timor issue for another year. This decision followed Secretary-General de Cuellar's suggestion that a discussion would not be helpful and that the matter should be left to quiet diplomacy.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, on the other hand, voted on the issue at a meeting in Geneva on 16 February 1983. By 16 votes to 14, with 10 abstentions it passed a resolution which affirmed the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence, and urged Portugal and Indonesia to cooperate with the UN to this end as well as to alleviate suffering in the region. For many observers, East Timor remains a test case of the UN General Assembly's recognition of the legitimacy of the struggle of the peoples under colonial and alien domination to exercise their right to self-determination and independence by all the necessary means at their disposal.

The Permanent People's Tribunal, which was established in 1979 and whose activities are based on the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples (4 July 1976) which aims at safeguarding the inalienable collective rights of the people, discussed the problem of East Timor in its Lisbon session in June 1981. The People's Tribunal condemned the annexation by Indonesia and considered any government which supports Indonesia in this unlawful annexation as an accomplice. The Algiers' Declaration and the People's Tribunal are not, however, officially recognized and states do not feel bound by the verdicts of the Tribunal.

THE CHURCHES AND EAST TIMOR

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Status of the Catholic Church

Under Portuguese rule Church and State were closely linked as equal partners, each having its own specific task and mission. In 1940, the Vatican and Portugal concluded a Concordat guaranteeing full freedom of religion and establishing a close link between Church and State. Thus the government could substantially influence the appointment of bishops. At the same time, an agreement was reached on missions in the Portuguese overseas territories. Education was entrusted almost exclusively to the Church, while the State subsidized spiritual and ecclesiastical activities in the field of education and social service. This close relation was brought to an end abruptly by the Indonesian invasion.

In spite of repeated pressure on the part of the Indonesian government, e.g. the visits of the Indonesian Foreign Minister to Rome in November 1981 and in May 1982, and in spite of the rumour that the Vatican's representative in Indonesia, Bishop Pablo Puente, supports Indonesian rule of the island, the Church in East Timor is not part of the Church in Indonesia but is directly responsible to the Vatican Secretary of State represented in Indonesia by the Apostolic Nunciature in Jakarta. Were the Vatican to agree to the demand of the Indonesian Government and to incorporate Dili into the Church in Indonesia, this would constitute official recognition of the annexation. For the same reason, since the retirement of Mgr Roberto (a Portuguese), Bishop of East Timor until 1977, the Church of East Timor has been headed by an Apostolic Administrator instead of a bishop. This refusal to name a bishop, according to Askin, allowed the Vatican to avoid taking an awkward decision. If a bishop were appointed, Rome would have to decide whether or not he should be part of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference. To say "no" would infuriate the Indonesian Government which has been relatively well-disposed towards the Catholic Church; to say "yes" would mean de facto recognition by the Church of Indonesian rule.[48]

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[48] Askin, S.,"Indonesian Church hits E. Timor oppression", *National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City), 24 February 1984, p. 26.

A reflection in faith

The difficult situation facing the Church as well as the population of East Timor has brought the two together. As the suffering Timorese have turned en masse to the Church for protection, support and direction, the latter found itself converted into a Church of the people.[49] There is a strong relationship of mutual trust between the Church and the population: the people are inclined to turn to Church people for aid and advice rather than to the Indonesian occupying power.

The religious of East Timor, in a common reflection addressed to the Indonesian Major Religious Superiors on the occasion of their 1981 session wrote: "We must all realize that the Indonesian National Army, which liberated Indonesia from the colonial power in an astonishing manner, will never liberate the people of East Timor from their colonial situation towards autonomy and national independence because our situation and reality are very different. What has taken place during these five years is mostly invasion, war, looting, the destruction of the indigenous population, territorial subjection, colonial exploitation, the expulsion of the indigenous population who are replaced by people from other islands, military occupation and attempts at mass mobilizations of people (from 12 to 55 years) to make war on each other."

With regard to the situation and emotional environment, the religious of East Timor testified: "The people are now experiencing oppression without end, their rights are not acknowledged. The people do not have a voice, and live in fear. Indeed the people live in a situation of continual war, and thus must be silent and submissive. But they remain in a very clear position concerning their ideals. Their faith stands firm and is strengthened, although it is not always able to be expressed in words, but is seen with the eyes of faith by the religious who accompany the people."

In pledging their support for the people they saw that "the East Timorese religious feel solidarity with the people and, because of that, feel obliged to express the people's experience of faith". "For us living the faith without serious endeavours for the building of social justice is making faith merely foreign and mystical. Creating justice together with the present Indonesian government is not possible, or not yet, although the people desire justice greatly. A faith which illuminates the minds of the people cannot develop in a Christian action, because social justice has not yet come into being. There is, as yet, no way out from the oppression from above. Because of that we, the religious, must always be alert and thoughtful that the faith of the people is not trodden on."[50]

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[49] Walsh, P., "Timor people support the Church in its opposition to Indonesian take-over", *National Outlook*, November 1982, p. 11.

[50] "East Timor: A Refection in faith", *Asia Bureau Australia Newsletter*, Parkville, June 1982, p. 1.

The position of Mgr. da Costa Lopes

Mgr. da Costa Lopes, Apostolic Administrator in Dili from 1976 till 1983, has been and remains the most outspoken critic of the excesses of the Indonesian military. He was rebuked by the Indonesians for his outspoken statements to the world press about the hunger suffered by his people and the reports from villages of killings, rape, torture and bombings carried out by the military. Mgr. da Costa Lopes was one of the few people who could criticize Indonesian policy in East Timor without any fear of being arrested. This can be seen e.g. from the fact that two delegates of the People's Representative Assembly, appointed by the Indonesian government, who had submitted a report to President Suharto in Jakarta were arrested upon their return to Dili. They were set free only because of international pressure. The report, which was prefaced by a declaration of loyalty to Indonesia, accused some officials of behaviour "that can only be described as being the behaviour of conquerors toward a conquered people" and reported on cases of torture, maltreatment, murder and immoral sexual acts inflicted upon women prisoners.

Mgr. da Costa Lopes broke through an Indonesian wall of silence when, in November 1981, two of his letters to friends in Australia were obtained by Australian reporters and rushed into print. These letters, not intended for publication, contained charges of mass murder by Indonesian troops and warned of renewed famine danger. In one letter he described the military operations as being like a "cyclone which swept Timor from end to end, leaving the island in a true tragedy: the death of innocent children of two to three years, pregnant women and defenseless people massacred only because they did not want to lose their identity among the nations of the world". To the head of the Australian Catholic Relief he wrote that "the Catholic Church, running all risks, had to denounce to the world the atrocities committed during four days of the siege near the famous Rock of St. Anthony in Lacluta, where more than 500 Timorese were killed". He also appealed to ACR for "food, rice and corn for the survival of the people" to sustain them through a feared renewal of famine.[51]

Indonesian officials used reports from outside visitors to challenge the words of Mgr. da Costa Lopes. More specifically the statements of former Australian Prime Minister Whitlam ("the bishop could not even mention his sources") and US CRS-Indonesia director Patrick Johns ("he has not visited any of the areas in question") were used to attack the credibility and good faith of the Apostolic Administrator.[52] Despite these attacks he continued to reaffirm his accusations in interviews with some of the few, carefully-screened foreign visitors Indonesia allowed into East Timor. Mgr.

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[51] Quoted in Askin, S., "Church leaders' roles critical in East Timor as Indonesia continues siege", *National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City), 7 May 1982, p. 24.
[52] *Ibid.*

da Costa Lopes considers the problem of East Timor primarily as a problem of law and justice. By administering justice, the Indonesian government might win the hearts of the Timorese. The Indonesians, however, regard East Timor as a military problem alone and do not apply the *Pancasila* which they proclaim.

When, after direct visits to Rome by Indonesian diplomats and through the Nunciature in Jakarta, the Indonesian government put pressure on the Vatican to remove Mgr. da Costa Lopes, the latter had to resign and was succeeded by Mgr. Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo. Now in Lisbon, Mgr. da Costa Lopes remains an outspoken critic of the activities of the occupying forces.

To speak...or not to speak

It is much more difficult for an institution to take a clear position concerning political issues, than it is for an individual. As far as the situation of East Timor is concerned, the Church is confronted with a clear dilemma: either she has to accept the integration of East Timor as a fait accompli or she must openly support the ongoing liberation struggle of FRETILIN. If the Church accepts integration or annexation, she cannot show this openly without alienating a great number of the faithful. To opt for FRETILIN, because of its armed struggle, is equally impossible. Church leaders, therefore, are less outspoken on the issue of self-determination and political integration than on the humanitarian situation.

Walsh explained the eight-year-long silence of the Indonesian Church (1975-November 1983) in terms of a minority Church safeguarding its position by opting for a genuine *Pancasila*. The Church in Indonesia, he stated "has no capacity to protest in a manifest way various injustices in Indonesia so it cannot reject, correct or change the Indonesian government's policy on East Timor. Thus while nationally and internationally the Indonesian Church is prepared to help the Church in Timor, it cannot help it in the way a large part of the Timorese people would like, namely to win freedom from Indonesia and become an autonomous Timorese State. Its special role is to serve the people and Church in the area of human development."[53]

Several other reasons, gathered by the Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, were given by Indonesians themselves to justify the silence of the Church. Some reasons were political: there were signs, Church people stated, that the independent state that might have taken shape in East Timor would be socialist or Communist,

[53] Walsh, P., "Notes on the East Timor issue, based on an international visit, 1980", *Action for World Development*, Fitzoy, Christmas 1980.

something unacceptable to Indonesia, the ASEAN countries, Australia and the United States. Others questioned the moral right of a tiny group of people in the heart of the country to demand self-determination. Some reasons were cultural or historical: "it is none of the world's business what we do or don't do"; "it is not our way to air our differences with our government in public"; "we rarely criticize authority. We prefer dialogue." Theologically, this concern for consensus was expressed by some as a wish for "prophetic communities rather than prophetic bishops or other individuals". Most Church people felt that the Catholic laity would not support their bishops in criticism of the government over East Timor since what they want most of all is a secure place in economic and social society. Finally, it was said, public criticism would end whatever good the Church is now able to do in East Timor. This help is by all accounts significant and includes material aid, moral support and help with communications.

A more dissenting voice remarked that "the decision we make on East Timor — to speak out or not to speak — will determine in large measure what we will be as a Church. Are we another bloc in society seeking prosperity and influence or are we a religious community led by the Gospel? Right now we've got them mixed up." This speaker, an Indonesian Jesuit, also referred to the very real sacrifices that Catholics would be called upon to make if they were to oppose their government and added: "Remember we're not a heroic community. We're a cross-section of society, weak and fearful like most people."[54]

The Vatican too remained silent for a long time. Although it never formally recognized Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor, it did not speak out on the issue and neither did it avail itself of its possibility as an official observer at the United Nations of playing an active role in the discussion on East Timor. It was this silence which frustrated the people and the local Church of East Timor. In their reflection addressed to the Indonesian Religious Superiors (MASRI) in 1981 they stated that they did not understand "why the Indonesian Church and the universal Roman Church have up till now not stated openly and officially their solidarity with the Church, people and religious of East Timor. Perhaps this has been the heaviest blow for us... We felt stunned by this silence which seemed to allow us to die deserted."[55]

A change of policies

In June 1983, the outside world heard of the resignation of Mgr. da Costa Lopes as Apostolic Administrator. He was succeeded by Mgr. Belo,

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[54] "East Timor — to speak or not to speak —", *Info on Human Development* (Manila), February 1984, p. 7.
[55] "East Timor: A Reflection in Faith", o.c., p.1.

a 35-year-old East Timorese Salesian who returned to East Timor in 1981 after 13 years' study in Portugal. In order to accept his appointment he had to take Indonesian nationality. This appointment gave rise to a whole series of speculations: had the Nuncio sponsored his candidacy because he, unlike his confreres, had not been a witness to the dramatic events of the past years? What pressures were used by the Indonesian government and why did the Vatican give in? Was this appointment a gesture of goodwill immediately before the planned, but later cancelled, trip of the Pope to Indonesia in 1984? Why had Mgr. da Costa Lopes resigned? He himself declared in an interview to two Portuguese newspapers that he was very tired and had submitted his resignation to the Vatican after it had been suggested to him by the Nuncio, Bishop Puente,[56] a known advocate of the integration of East Timor and Indonesia.

In Timor this change provoked a number of reactions. The Timorese clergy protested and refused to attend Mgr. Belo's installation ceremony. A group of priests from East Timor wrote a letter to the Pope and to various bishops' conferences expressing their disappointment in some Indonesian Church people who had taken part in the smear-campaign against Mgr. da Costa Lopes. This group stressed its solidarity with the clear position of the now exiled, former Apostolic Administrator in his defence of basic human rights. In October, the Portuguese solidarity paper "Em Timor-Leste a paz é possivel" published a letter to Pope John Paul II, signed by 180 Timorese Catholics, and presented to the Nuncio on 2 May 1983. The signatories, who according to Timorese refugees in Portugal are representative of the Catholic community in Timor, expressed their disappointment at the Vatican's silence, testified to the good work done by Mgr. da Costa Lopes, and requested the Pope to maintain him as their Apostolic Administrator.

The appointment of Mgr. Belo also stirred public opinion at the international level. His appointment caused concern among the many opponents of Indonesian rule who regarded Mgr. Belo as too moderate, if not actually identified with the Indonesian regime. The brutality in East Timor has, however, horrified Mgr. Belo just as it did his predecessor. Instead of remaining silent, Mgr Belo vigorously condemned the violence, persecution, loss of freedom and the disappearances as Indonesia stepped up its anti-guerilla operations. In a letter to Mgr. da Costa Lopes, Mgr. Belo told of the rural population who were forced to abandon their crops to fight with Indonesian troops against their compatriots. Local inhabitants, he reported, were encouraged to hand over and judge FRETILIN supporters, and if they were found guilty, the locals knifed or beat them to death.[57]

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[56] *Diario de Noticias* and *Libertar*, reprinted in *Em Timor-Leste a paz é possivel* (Lisbon), July 1983 .

[57] *The Tablet*, 18 February 1984, p. 447.

A plea for a just and lasting peace

The harsh words of Mgr. Belo concerning the Indonesian army and his anxiety over the plight of the East Timorese did not fall on deaf ears. Mgr. Belo briefed the plenary assembly of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference in November, following a warning from the Indonesian Religious Affairs' Office of East Timor after he had protested against "arrests and violence" in the course of a sermon at Dili cathedral in October. The Indonesian bishops responded by a long overdue, courageous but cautious letter to the East Timorese clergy on 17 November 1983 — the first since the Indonesian invasion. Nowhere in the document did they refer by name to either of the parties involved, the Indonesian army or FRETILIN, nor did they at any point explicitly comment on the justice or injustice of the Indonesian annexation of East Timor.

The Indonesian bishops assured the East Timorese clergy of support in their struggle for human rights. They stated that they could not "refuse to control the events that are happening among our people, especially those affairs which determine the welfare or the misery of the masses who are involved in or who are the victims of cruel oppression". While warning that "the role and competence of the Church must in no way be confused with the political community nor bound to any political system" they stressed that they themselves struggled in various ways "to enforce an acknowledgement and respect for those things considered most sacred to the people of East Timor: their religion, their family and their land". They urged authorities in East Timor to work in a "spirit of honesty" to resolve the situation and called upon the Church of East Timor to be the "vanguard of a peace that is more than an absence of war, a balance of power between enemies or what can be brought about by dictatorship".[58]

Portuguese Christians who had lived in East Timor, the majority of them former missionaries to Timor, wrote a letter to the Pope on the eve of his visit to their country (12-15 May 1982) in which they expressed their concern for the plight of the people of East Timor whose voice hardly ever reached the free world. They pointed out that the tragedy of East Timor attracted little or no attention in the eyes of international public opinion and that, according to witnesses from Timor, the people were very disappointed at the lack of support from sister Churches. According to these former missionaries, the people of East Timor only have confidence in the Church and in a few government people genuinely concerned with peace and justice. They expressed their confidence that the Pope would never allow the integration of the Church of East Timor into the Indonesian Church against the will of the people and its pastors.[59]

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[58] Letter of MAWI to Mgr. Belo, 17 November 1983.
[59] Letter, 6 May 1982, reprinted in *Informatiedienst NMR*, o.c., pp. 6-7.

The Permanent Council of Portuguese Bishops, in a press release dated 28 March 1984, also expressed its concern for East Timor. They stated: "In view of the information that reaches us from East Timor, of late even more frequently, the Portuguese bishops cannot abstain from manifesting publicly their great anxiety and deep felt solidarity with the people of this martyrized country, which is victim of a tragedy that fell on it nearly nine years ago, and unhappily continues to date." They noted that "it would be an illusion to think that behind the sad events that develop in East Timor, there is no strongly felt awareness of a national identity which cannot accept to be repressed or annihilated. Timor aspires to the full expression of its own identity; to impede this not only means a physical genocide, but also a 'cultural' genocide, the latter being worse than the first, as it attacks both the survivors and those who die, and the future generations as well as the present ones."

In closing, the bishops appealed "to the Portuguese Government which has a historical, moral and legal responsibility; to the Indonesian government, the occupying power; to the international organizations, who might act as intermediaries; to the political leaders of East Timor, whether they be in their own country or in exile, and urgently request them all to put an end rapidly and effectively to such a grievous situation which seems to have become permanent. While safeguarding the legitimate interests of each party involved, they must assure the Timorese people continuity as an historical entity, with full self-respect and the respect of neighbouring countries."[60]

A similar appeal was addressed to the Pope by the President of Portugal, General Eanes, when he asked him, during his stay in Portugal, to act as mediator in the problem of East Timor. According to Walsh, the Pope in his own diplomatic manner demonstrated his solidarity by allowing the Mass which he celebrated at Fatima to be simultaneously translated into Tetum, the language of East Timor. According to Agence France Press reports from Jakarta the cancellation of the papal visit to Indonesia, planned for May 1984, was due to the situation in East Timor and to the position taken by the Indonesian bishops in November 1983.[61]

The Pope once more expressed his apprehensions in his address to the new Indonesian Ambassador to the Holy See, General Sastrapoespita, when the latter presented his diplomatic credentials at the Vatican, on 7 July 1984. The Pope stressed that "the Holy See continues to follow the situation in East Timor with preoccupation and with the hope that particular consideration will be given in every circumstance to the ethnic, religious and cultural identity of the people". Stressing the many efforts the Holy See has made "to contribute to helping the people of that area and how it has earnestly recommended respect for human rights", the Pope

[60] Press Release of the Permanent Council of the Portuguese Bishops, 28 March 1984.
[61] Cf. *Le Monde*, 3 May 1984, p. 4.

made it clear that it is "the ardent wish of the Holy See that all rights of individuals be respected and that every effort be made to lighten the sufferings of the people by facilitating the work of relief organizations and by ensuring the access of humanitarian aid to those in need".[62]

Following the letter of the Indonesian bishops and the press declaration issued by the Permanent Council of Portuguese Bishops, several Asian and European Bishops' Conferences and Associations of Major Religious Superiors, expressed their deep solidarity with and their great concern for the Church and the people of East Timor. The Dutch bishops, in a letter to Mgr. Belo dated 27 June 1984, wrote that it was their "deep conviction that a peaceful and just solution can only be found when, while safeguarding the legitimate interests of each party involved, the will of the East Timorese people will be respected and their continuity as a historical entity will be assured". The Australian National Council of Major Superiors, aware "that the military occupation has had a devasting and irreparable effect on all sections of the population" and of the lack of "opportunity given to the people of East Timor in decisions affecting their daily life", urged that the "international community be given full opportunity to scrutinize events in East Timor and to assist in just resolution of the present impasse".[63]

THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES

The Protestant Church, which had 15,000 members in East Timor in 1982, is a continuously growing community. Before 1975, East Timor had only a small Protestant community which was taken over by army chaplains. In 1977, the Indonesian Council of Churches — in Indonesia only Protestant Churches belong to the Council — received a report from Dili stating that there were some 4,000 Protestant Christians with a charismatic background in East Timor. The Indonesian Council of Churches (DGI) decided to make contact with this community. A first DGI delegation visited East Timor. This four-day visit was the first, official non-governmental visit made at the invitation of the Indonesian government. It was accompanied by much ceremony and heavy security measures.

In 1980, the DGI development centre started an ecumenical aid programme for East Timor. Within the framework of this programme, the DGI visited East Timor a second time in June 1982. The report of this mission mentioned that several security officers and government officials were active as deacons or elders in the Protestant community of Dili. A member of the delegation commented: "I am not saying that this is a good thing for

[62] *Osservatore Romano* (English edition, Rome), 13 august 1984, p. 5.
[63] *Sunday Examiner* (Hong Kong), 14 September 1984, p. 10.

the Protestant Church, I only say that there is a close link between the government and the Church."

The above-mentioned report demonstrates the position of the Indonesian Council of Churches vis-a-vis the problem of East Timor. In many respects, its attitude is similar to that of the Indonesian government. In its report, the DGI states that, in line with the Gospel, it has decided to participate in a responsible manner in the building of a just society. As far as East Timor is concerned this means that "the Churches, in a responsible manner, want to be involved in the future of East Timor, instead of remaining passive in the face of a long civil war and of the possibility of foreign intervention at the invitation of the so-called Democratic Republic of East Timor". Furthermore, they state that "the presence of the Church in East Timor must be a sign of solidarity with the people. The Church should support efforts to assimilate the people in Indonesian society."[64]

The DGI requests for funds from the World Council of Churches in Geneva for its aid programmes have met with mixed feelings and have raised a certain amount of controversy. It should be noted that, at its Fifth Assembly in Nairobi (1975), the World Council of Churches, a few hours after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, urged Indonesia to withdraw its armed forces in order to make self-determination possible.

THE FUTURE

For the people of East Timor, it looks as if the next few years will bring even more hunger and an escalation of violence. East Timor is a political as well as a humanitarian problem. Not only the Indonesian government, but also representatives from some Western governments, tend to consider East Timor exclusively as a humanitarian problem. Both aspects are, however, closely linked: discontent about the political situation leads to resistance on the side of the people, reaction by the Armed Forces to this resistance makes the human situation worse, and this in turn accentuates the political conflict. Although political solutions are not likely in the short term, in the long-term a political solution is needed, not least for the humanitarian aspects.

The right to self-determination

The right to self-determination is not explicitly mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it is set out in the two international agreements of 1966 (art. 1). From the way in which the right

[64] DGI, "Oost-Timor rapport", o.c., pp. 9-12.

to self-determination is mentioned it can be concluded that the member states of the United Nations, including Indonesia, are bound to strive for its implementation. The right to self-determination is also explicitly mentioned in Resolution 1514XV adopted by the General Assembly on 14 December 1960. In the appendix, "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", it is stated that the submission of a people to foreign domination constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, which is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and an obstacle to world peace.

Indonesia, too, signed this resolution. That is why the General Assembly in 1975 could urge Indonesia to withdraw in order to give the people of that region an opportunity to achieve its right to self-determination and independence. Indonesia, however, has never complied with this demand. Indonesia considers that the process of self-determination came to an end with its acceptance of the petition of the provisional government set up by Indonesia itself on 17 July 1976. The condition laid down by the UN, namely the impartial implementation on the basis of universal suffrage for adults and freedom of speech for the population concerned, was never fulfilled. The UN, therefore, has rejected Indonesia's claim that the right to self-determination has been exercised. There is little chance that the people of East Timor will be able to exercise their right to self-determination in the near future. Indeed most countries take an attitude of pragmatic accommodation to Indonesia.

The right to self-determination was once again stressed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union which gathered in April 1982 in Lagos, Nigeria. By a crushing majority (37 votes in favour, 6 against and 3 abstentions), this meeting approved the resolution of the Committee on Non-Self Governing Territories and Ethnic Questions, reaffirming the right of East Timor to self-determination and independence and condemning the use of force to prevent the people from exercising that right. In a recent statement to the American Bishops' Committee for Social Development and World Peace (12 June 1984), Mgr. da Costa Lopes stated that the Church of East Timor "would have no objection if the East Timorese people, free of all pressure, internal or external, would freely choose the part of Indonesia". But the Apostolic Administrator is convinced "that more than 90 %, if not 99 %, would vote against it". Mgr. da Costa Lopes concluded that "only through dialogue, and not through military means, can there be a lasting and just solution to the tragedy of East Timor. Western nations that proclaim the principles of justice, liberty and self-determination cannot fail to support such a process." [65] The major political powers, however, see it differently.

Some members of the US Senate showed an increased interest in the situation of East Timor in the early 80s when a resolution was moved

[65] Statement of Mgr. da Costa Lopes to the American Bishops' Committee for Social Development and World Peace, Washington, 12 June 1984.

to "allow international relief agencies increased access to East Timor" to "facilitate the reunification of families" and to "agree to negotiations through which Indonesian troops will be withdrawn from East Timor and the people of East Timor will be permitted to freely exercise their international right of self-determination".[66] This resolution was referred for study to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and has not yet been voted upon. The efforts of concerned members of Congress which have prevented the issue from disappearing totally from the American conscience should be commended, but all take a narrow view of the humanitarian issues at stake in East Timor. They deplore the suffering of the Timorese people but do not address themselves to the issue of self-determination.[67]

In June 1982, after several Senate enquiries, the Portuguese government, with unanimous support of parliament, created a commission to follow the situation in East Timor, the first specialized, official body to deal with the East Timorese question since the approval of the Portuguese Constitution of 1976, Article 297 of which expresses the determination of Portugal to assume its responsibilities towards the Timorese people and to work for self-determination. Despite its moral and legal responsibility to facilitate Timorese self-determination, Portugal has so far failed to meet these responsibilities.

Australia's "realpolitik", defended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, during the national Labor Conference in July 1984, has softened the Labor party's position on East Timor, contrary to the wishes of many of the party's rank and file. Like most other free countries, as has once again been proved by the decision of the UN to freeze the Timor issue, Australia fell victim to the common fear of antagonizing Jakarta and bases its policy on strategic and economic interests.

Human Rights

Indonesian authorities have continuously embargoed information coming out of East Timor. The conditions of war make it impossible to investigate each and every atrocity reported. Independent observers, humanitarian, relief and human rights organizations have been refused access to East Timor. And still, long lists of cases of unspeakable human suffering and oppression have reached the outside world: systematic persecution for the purpose of intimidation, the torture of people suspected of being members of, or of sympathizing with, FRETILIN, disappearances and murder, imprisonment and forced relocation. In August 1983, Amnesty Interna-

[66] Senate Concurrent Resolution 87, 97 Congress, Second Session, Vol. 128, 48, 28 April 1982.
[67] *South East Asia Chronicle* (Berkeley), June 1984.

tional published a review report based on several carefully controlled reports.[68] This report provides proof that violations of human rights are condoned by the authorities.[69] Other sources mention that "annual promotion for Indonesian officers is determined by the degree of crime they commit and the techniques of torture they apply".[70]

Amnesty International, based on its findings, expressed its concern that the human rights of the East Timorese will be violated as long as the people of East Timor resist Indonesian occupation. Operation Persatuan proved Amnesty International to be correct. FRETILIN Commander and National Political Commissioner Gusmao likewise stated that "hunger, misery, corruption, torture, persecution, disappearances, massacres will only stop when the occupying forces get out of East Timor".[71]

The role of international aid

International aid agencies can play an important role in alleviating the suffering of the East Timorese. Moreover, their presence could prevent violations of human rights. In order to ensure their presence, the international community, in solidarity with the people of East Timor, must pay close and continuous attention to developments in East Timor. But "it would be a tragic illusion, or a cynical one," Mgr. da Costa Lopes stressed, "to believe that humanitarian aid and material things will by themselves solve the question of East Timor. The Indonesian military, which is responsible for many tens of thousands of deaths in East Timor, is brazen enough to boast of all the money it has spent in East Timor on roads, buildings and other facilities, which are frequently used in any case for military purposes or to otherwise facilitate their occupation of the territory. But no material goods can ever compensate for the denial of self-determination and independence, for the unending bloodshed and violence."[72]

The role of the Churches

In his address to the American bishops, Mgr. da Costa Lopes remarked that it is "perhaps because of the sea of suffering that the East Timorese have increasingly turned to God and the Catholic Church... which ministers to those who have faced the atrocities committed by the Indonesian forces." "In the face of the cultural and psychological genocide that the Indonesian

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[68] AI, Statement, o.c..
[69] ICMS, *Asia Newsletter*, o.c., p. 15.
[70] *South East Asia Chronicle*, p. 14.
[71] Letter to the Australia East Timor Association, reprinted in *South East Asia Chronicle*, pp. 14-15..
[72] Statement, of Mgr. da Costa Lopes, o.c..

Army has imposed on us, the large scale deaths, whether directly from the war or indirectly from starvation and disease," da Costa Lopes saw that "the Catholic Church has emerged as the only one organization that the East Timorese people trust. There is a special and profound respect for the Church. Everything the people know they tell to priests. The East Timor Church has listened intently for the nearly nine years since the Indonesian invasion. With the highest authority the East Timorese Church can say that it knows the plight as well as the deepest aspirations of the people."

"In the absence of genuine self-determination and independence for East Timor, the war and misery in East Timor will continue indefinitely," Mgr. da Costa Lopes testified. "We in the Church know that the resistance of the East Timorese people continues on all levels — in their hearts and souls, in their prayers to God."

The Church in East Timor not only lives with the consequences of a war the end of which is not yet in sight. She is also faced with persecution and resentment by the Indonesian armed forces, "not only because of her moral and independent organizational strength, but also because, despite constant pressure by the Indonesian military, the Church refuses to call upon FRETILIN to lay down their arms". In the past, Mgr. da Costa Lopes stated, "many surrendered guerillas were executed. The East Timorese Church has no reason to trust Indonesian promises in this regard. For this refusal on our part we are now the target of retaliation."[73]

To be the voice of, and to stand up for, the genuine rights of its people is a heavy burden for the Church in East Timor. To carry on she needs not only sympathy but real support from the sister Churches all over the world, not only to alleviate the suffering of her people but to stand up for the internationally recognized right of self-determination.

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[73] *Ibid.*

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